



A PATIENT'S GUIDE TO INFECTION CONTROL

AT THE DOCTOR'S OFFICE

We go to doctor appointments because we want to stay well or get well. Yet ironically, the doctor's office is a place where infections can be transmitted because sick people frequent them. As patients, there are things we can do for an extra margin of safety. The Nevada State Health Division urges you to take a few extra measures for protection.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Hand Hygiene

Hand hygiene is not just for medical personnel. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), frequent, thorough hand washing is the most important thing people can do to keep from getting sick. Consider these ideas, when visiting the doctor:

- Hand wash or sanitize frequently, especially at the end of your appointment
- Keep your hands away from your face
- Consider bringing your own reading materials for the waiting room, rather than flipping through the ones provided
- Have a purse-size hand sanitizer to use between soap-and-water washings

Speak Up!

A basic principle of health literacy is that patients should speak up when something does not seem right in the health care setting. Patients: it is okay to ask the doctor questions, and you should speak up if hand-washing has been overlooked. You are not being rude to politely demand to be touched with clean hands. Good hand hygiene is literally a matter of life and death and you're just being a proactive partner in your own safe care.

Likewise, it is okay to ask that your doctor swipe the flat part of the stethoscope prior to using it on you. This also applies to blood pressure cuffs and other shared medical devices that may come into contact with your skin.

For additional information on preventing healthcare- and community-acquired infections, visit the Safe Care Campaign website at www.safecarecampaign.org